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Wine and spirits industry warns of rising prices under new Trump tariffs

Importers and producers say added costs could reach consumers quickly and hurt small businesses across the supply chain

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Producers and importers of alcoholic beverages in the United States are warning that the new tariffs announced by President Donald Trump could lead to significant price increases for consumers. The tariffs, which the president described as “reciprocal,” were unveiled on April 2 and apply to a wide range of goods from nearly every country the U.S. trades with. While the administration argues that these measures are intended to reduce the trade deficit and protect American industries, those in the wine and

spirits sector say the immediate impact will be higher prices and financial strain across the supply chain.

Bartholomew Broadbent, owner of Broadbent Selections, a Virginia-based wine importer, said that the real cost of these tariffs will be much higher than the official rates suggest. For example, French wines are now subject to a 20% tariff, but Broadbent explained that by the time those costs are passed through importers, distributors, and retailers, consumers could see price hikes closer to 30%. A bottle of wine that currently sells for $9.99 could soon cost $13 or $14.

Broadbent's company imports wines from 11 countries and also works with domestic producers in California. He said more than 80% of his business is now affected by the new tariffs. Wines from South Africa face a particularly steep tariff of 30%, making them among the hardest hit. He also pointed out that even American wineries will feel the impact because many rely on European suppliers for barrels, corks, and other materials essential to production.

The Bourgogne Wine Board (BIVB) in France echoed these concerns. The Burgundy region exported nearly 21 million bottles of wine to the U.S. in 2024. In a statement, the BIVB warned that the tariffs could push their wines beyond key psychological price points for American consumers, potentially reducing demand. The organization said it regrets the U.S. decision and emphasized that it will hurt both French exporters and their American partners.

Scotch whisky producers are facing similar challenges. According to the Scotch Whisky Association, about 132 million bottles were imported into the U.S. last year. Drew McKenzie Smith, founder of Lindores Abbey Distillery in Scotland, said his products will now be subject to a 10% tariff under Trump's new policy targeting goods from the United Kingdom.

McKenzie Smith estimated that a bottle of his whisky currently priced at $60 will increase to around $66. While this may not seem like a dramatic jump, he said it represents a serious burden for small producers who operate on tighter margins than large multinational brands. He added that while bigger companies might be able to absorb some of these costs or shift focus to other markets, smaller distilleries like his

do not have that flexibility.

Industry experts say these tariffs come at a time when many producers are still recovering from previous trade disruptions and supply chain issues caused by global events over recent years. The uncertainty surrounding how long these tariffs will remain in place adds another layer of difficulty for businesses trying to plan ahead.

Despite warnings from economists and industry leaders about potential negative consequences for consumers and small businesses alike, President Trump has remained firm in his stance. He argues that these tariffs are necessary to level the playing field and bring manufacturing jobs back to America.

However, those working in wine and spirits say they see little benefit from this approach. Instead, they anticipate reduced sales, strained relationships with international partners, and fewer choices for American consumers at higher prices. As importers begin adjusting their orders and retailers prepare for increased costs, many in the industry are bracing for what they believe will be a difficult period ahead.